

Attracting undergraduate students to surgical specialties through a week-long summer course

A 5-year single-center experience



B. Doyen¹, W. Willaert², H. Maertens¹, I. Van Herzeele¹

On behalf of the Institute of Training and Clinical Innovative Technology Gent (ITCIT)

¹Department of Thoracic and Vascular Surgery, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium

²Department of Gastrointestinal Surgery, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium



Background

Choosing which specialty to pursue after graduating may be challenging for medical students. In order for students to make **informed career choices**, they should be exposed to clinical practice early on. A surgical summer school was created to introduce students to multiple specialties active in the operating theatre.

The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of the surgical summer school on the participants' interests and career choices.

Methods

The surgical summer school is a voluntary five-day summer program that combines **personal testimonies**, interactive video- and livestreamed **case discussions** and various **hands-on workshops**, where multiple simulation-based tools are used. All sessions are supervised by experienced surgical staff members.



Sterile techniques workshop



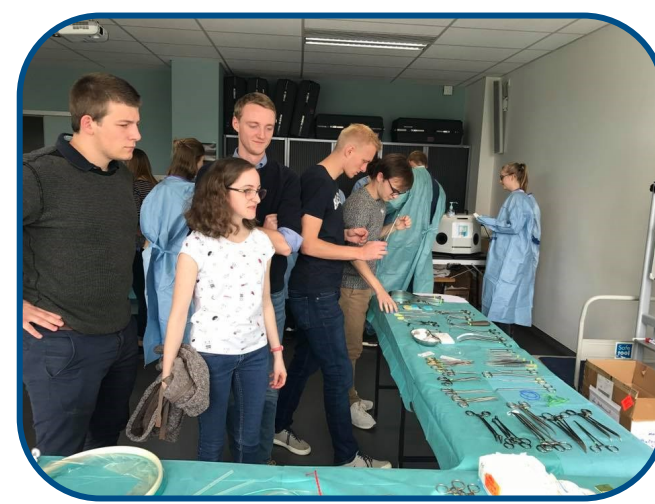
Endovascular surgery workshop



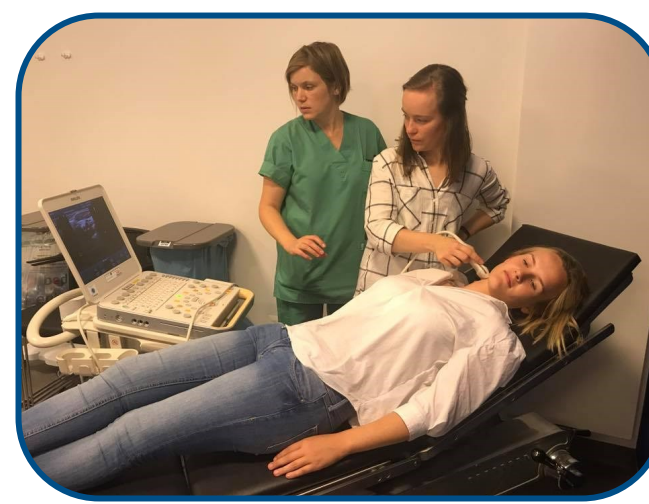
Laparoscopy workshop



Hysteroscopy workshop



Surgical toolkit demo



Ultrasound workshop



Vascular suturing workshop

Participants were asked to complete questionnaires about **demographic information** and their **career choice interests** before and after the course, together with a subjective questionnaire about the course.

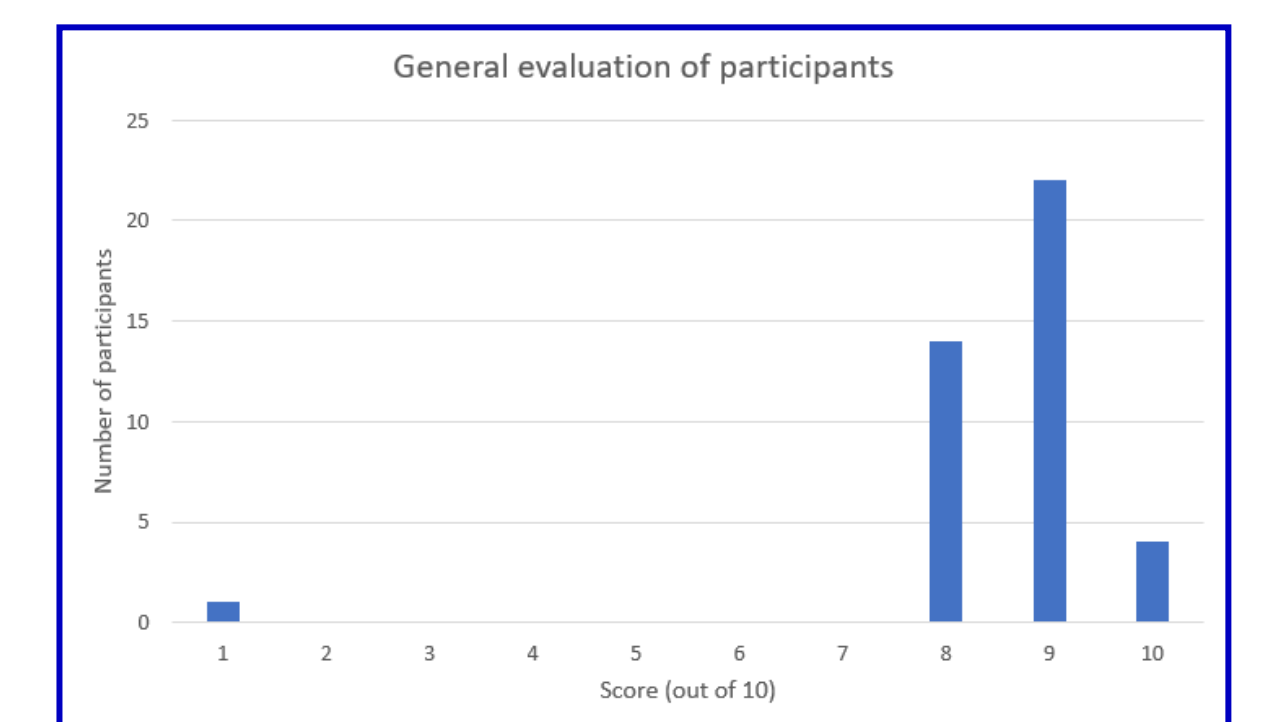
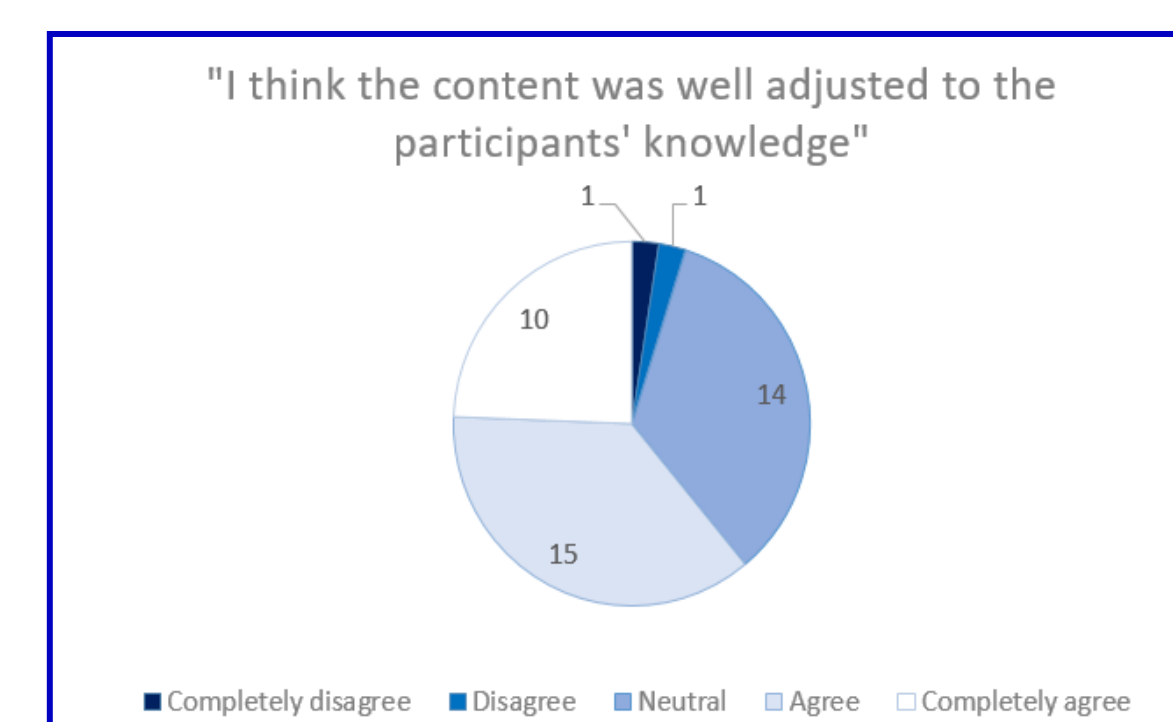
All participants who completed the questionnaires were e-mailed after two years to assess their **final career choices**.

Results

In September 2017, forty-one third-year medical students participated in the surgical summer school.

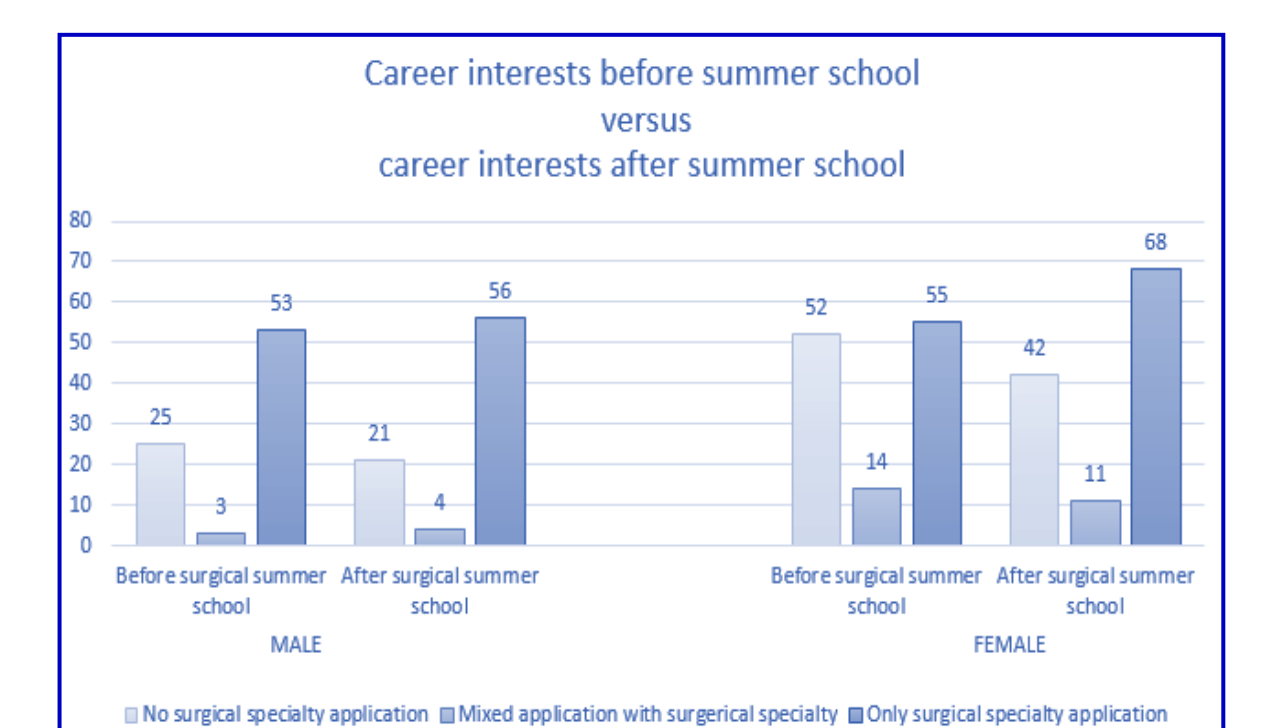
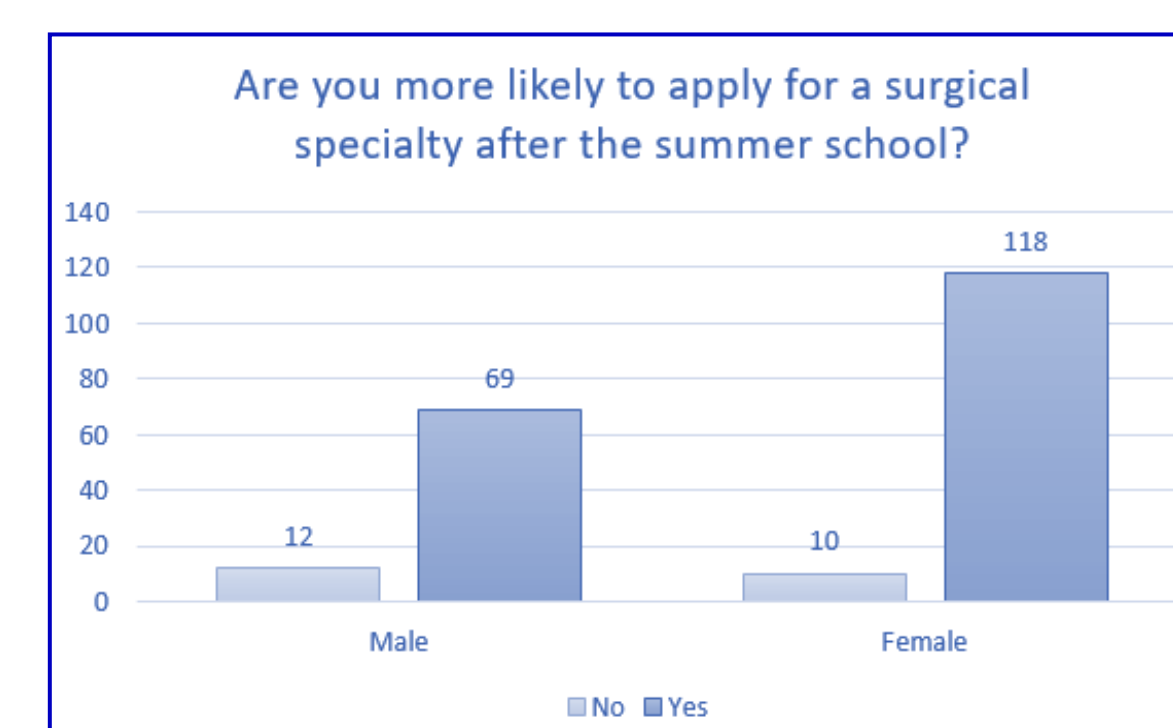
On the **subjective questionnaires** participants agreed that:

- ▶ Teaching methods were appropriate (35/41; 85%)
- ▶ Their personal learning goals were achieved (35/41; 85%)
- ▶ The content was quite well adjusted to the knowledge (25/41; 61%)



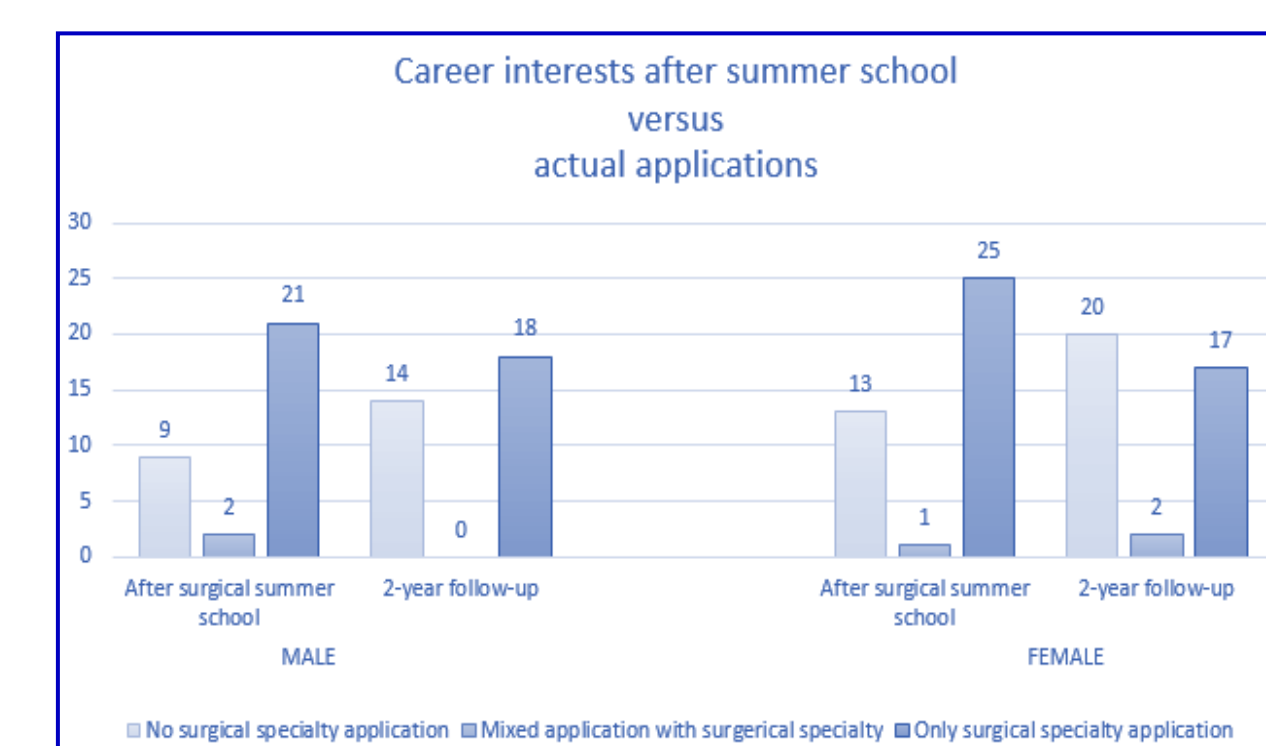
Between 2013 and 2017 a total of 243 students participated in the summer school.

- ▶ The career choice questionnaires completed by 86% (209/243)
- ▶ Students were generally more willing to apply for a surgical specialty



Two year after the summer school half of the respondents had chosen a surgical specialty.

- ▶ 28 of these candidates were accepted into surgical training



Conclusion

This summer school has been organized to inform and attract participants to surgical specialties. The course is **well-balanced** and results in a **considerable amount of students making a well-considered choice** for surgical specialties.